

Canada's #WhoWillYouHelp hits home in SA

 By Leigh Andrews

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In a time where femicide has faded somewhat from headlines but fear still lurks beneath the surface, an overseas ad is making an impact on social media feeds as it calls for action.



Screen grab from #WhoWillYouHelp?

#WhoWillYouHelp started going viral in SA after it was posted on Facebook by Sakhe Chuma Sotashe a little over a week ago, but it first made the rounds in 2015 globally.

It starts off in an uncomfortable way as we watch scenes unfold in which a man spikes a woman's drink in a bar while her back is turned, while another male gives a female co-worker an unrequested shoulder rub, with the males thanking the viewer for not speaking out.



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The tables are turned in the second half of the ad, where the females also break the fourth wall and thank the viewer for reporting the various acts.

“When you do nothing, you’re helping him. But when you do something, you help her.”

Video unavailable

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The 'stop sexual violence and harassment when you see it' public education campaign was paid for by the government of Ontario and created by Canada's Lyfeblood.com, GCOM Radio and DS Ent.

The synopsis on YouTube reads: "This is a short ad on male sexual violence against women. This ad campaign started by Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne to inform and educate people on what is "not OK" when dealing [with] sexual aggression from some males in our society."

Call out bad behaviour - anywhere, anytime

The message hits home, though most of the overseas commenters at the time found it sexist. In response, Fran Ballan wrote:

"I can understand guys getting defensive about how all the predators in this video are male. However, don't let the general message be lost on you. We can't let abusers hurt anyone at any time. They are the true enemy. They divide men and women, so that the fingers are pointed elsewhere and not at the real perpetrators. There should be at least one female harasser in this video, so that young men aren't alienated and the message stands."



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— That's the point that sticks with me.

The [Ontario newsroom](#) confirms that the ad went on to win four new awards from *Strategy Magazine*, including their inaugural Grand Prix award, for the ad's ability to, "maximise awareness and inspire conversation."



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And from conversation comes action.

A column by Melanie Verwoerd on [News24](#) further brings the impact of this 'speak out' message home.

Verwoerd speaks of the need to call out and fight “the obvious and insidious ways in which degrading women is part of our language, enshrined in the division of roles in the home and work place and yes, even in our music.”

This Facebook post is no longer available. It may have been removed, or the privacy settings of the post may have changed.

It's not about placing blame, but rather about taking action. It's about standing together to stop any form of degradation, cruelty or violence, across the lines of gender, race, nationality, ability, age, sexuality, income or culture.

It's about putting fairness first.

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

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